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Master of Professional Studies (Learning and Development)

ASSESSMENT

Research Project (MPS4060)

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Assessment Number	3
Date of Submission	26/4/2019
Date of entry to programme	October 2017
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Assessment Three: Research Project

Understanding reflective practice: encouraging better student engagement. First person action inquiry.

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Project Summary

The purpose of this research project is to examine my own engagement with reflective practice in my capacity as teacher and practitioner. This process of examination aims to improve attention to reflective practice within the student nutritional therapist environment where I teach. Research was conducted using a first-person action approach, with data acquired via critical self-observation and non-inquisitorial involvement in work-based situations feeding into action-reflection cycles. Conclusions highlighted strengths and areas for development as teacher and practitioner which may impact on student engagement with reflective practice on the course. Wider staff training and improvement to the curriculum were also identified with actions and recommendations including the adoption of new reflective practice teaching methods, further training for staff, adjustments to personal reflective practices and curriculum-wide developments. The proposed dissemination of findings and outcomes more widely will be via the nutritional therapy regulatory body and amongst fellow training providers.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this research project is to examine my own engagement with reflective practice in my capacity as teacher and practitioner. This process of examination aims to improve attention to reflective practice within the student nutritional therapist environment where I teach. I hope that in the longer term this may also contribute to the enhancement of reflective practice within the nutritional therapy practitioner community. This purpose derives from empirical evidence that attitude to reflective practice is currently poor amongst professional nutritional therapists, and on published literature that supports the view that good reflexivity runs parallel to good patient care, safer and more autonomous practitioner behaviour and better ability to engage in life-long learning (Bradbury et al., 2010, p2; Mann et al., 2007; Ruch, 2005).

This research project centres on my professional role at the Institute for Optimum Nutrition (ION), a well-regarded nutritional therapy training provider whose graduates comprise a significant proportion of the UK nutritional therapist pool. The Institute for Optimum Nutrition is a small, flat structured company that is flexible and responsive to a rapidly changing industry. Company management encourages development of working practices and welcomes vision. This allows staff to conduct insider research within the work environment and share findings which benefit their professional role as well as the company as a whole. As an insider researcher I am bound by organisational priorities such as the requirements of the curriculum and management expectations; my research journey sits within a keen awareness of role duality (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007). This is discussed further in *Methodology* and *Reflection*.

ION's Nutritional Therapy Diploma Course is delivered on line or via monthly weekend attendance sessions and attracts adult learners seeking second careers, chiefly within the 30-60 year age range. The vast majority of current nutritional practitioners are female and over 40 years old often with responsibilities such as raising children, career-building or caring for aging parents (Benbow et al., 2017). Complementary medicine mirrors mainstream healthcare educational programs in terms of the inclusion of reflective practice teaching and learning on its curricula (Richardson et al., 2003; Tate, 2003), nutritional therapy included (NTEC, 2015). In Nutritional Therapy, under-graduate education and post

graduate professional development tends to be weighted in favour of the expansion and deepening of scientific knowledge. This is a response to the need to stay abreast of what is essentially a new and rapidly evolving science and to establish a robust reputation among affiliates and competitors. However, this tendency can lead to a side-lining of reflective practice throughout the Nutritional Therapy curriculum and, as a consequence, into professional life. An example of this is illustrated in a recent study specific to nutritional therapy (Benbow et al., 2017) where reflective practice was not mentioned either with regards to monitoring current practitioner engagement or in order to highlight training needs. This is supported by empirical evidence gained over years of teaching that suggests that most students do not value reflective practice enough to employ it as a regular habit.

In contrast to this attitude commonly held by nutritional therapists, literature suggests that increasing student understanding and engagement with reflective practice enhances academic and clinical progression (Mann et al., 2009). The ability to reflect is also significant for the industry in general: it is arguably especially important for those who work in complementary medicine, as therapists usually enter private practice which can commonly involve working in isolation (Coldham, 2003) where the practitioner is often required to be self-accountable and self-regulating (Welsh et al., 2004).

With an academic history in arts and languages, becoming lecturer and teacher of reflective practice for the Nutritional Therapy Diploma Course has completed a circle, taking me from arts through to science, to then return to the art becoming a therapist. I originally studied languages because of my love of travel and culture, and these studies led me to delve into European literature and philosophy. Later, I was able to take advantage of my language skills by embarking on overseas development work with my husband and family in north Africa. I had always taken an interest in health and nutrition, and while I lived in Tunisia I was able to draw parallels in my observations between the very traditional Tunisian diet and the illnesses these people were living with and dying from. It was fascinating, and it fuelled my desire transform my interest in health and nutrition into a vocation. When I returned to the UK I applied immediately to study nutritional therapy, driven by a desire to do what I saw as tangible good in the world. Unfortunately, personal circumstances prevented me from returning overseas, but the urge to do good remains, and this is fulfilled currently through working with individuals to bring them to better health, and through charitable work. Over

the course of my professional development, difficult personal circumstances meant that long held assumptions had to be challenged. Key beliefs and expectations about life were shaken, and I was forced to scrutinise deeply held paradigmatic assumptions. I was pushed to examine myself in a 'magnifying mirror' (Bassot, 2016, p16), and see a little more clearly who I actually was, rather than seeing myself via other people's filters. The need to reflect had become nascent within me but this only became formalised and truly appreciated through my nutritional therapy studies.

Many years later, now as lecturer and teacher of reflective practice on this training course, as well as a nutritional therapy practitioner, I believe the ability to reflect is a core part of relationship-based practice and professional life-long learning, a view that is generally accepted within the sphere of reflective practice (Bradbury et al., 2010, p2; Ruch, 2005). As such, my research has been conducted within the context of reflective practice teaching on the Nutritional Therapy Diploma Course, with particular but not exclusive focus on the clinical practice modules that I have responsibility for as module leader. During these modules, students start to develop practitioner skills, learning takes on a more experiential approach, the onus on reflection becomes greater and the need to practise it becomes more overt. The clinical practice modules sit in the second half of the curriculum, meaning that I am tasked with shaping and delivering some of the course content during the final three semesters. As such, I have had the opportunity to trace my interactions with cohorts at this stage of the curriculum during a typical cycle of students' reflective practice training on the course. As teacher and facilitator of reflective practice my role is fundamental to whether students taking my modules engage with the subjects I teach or not (Brookfield, 2012, p70; Jay and Johnson, 2002). Only I can answer questions regarding what techniques I could introduce, questions I could ask, attitudes I could bring to my teaching sessions, assumptions I am making, modelling I can practise, changes I can adopt in myself as teacher. The resultant first person action research approach is discussed in *Methodology*.

Summary: Project aims

My personal sphere of influence lies in my role as facilitator of clinical skills and reflective practice within the nutritional therapy college (my place of work). In the light of evidence that the role of the facilitator is integral to learning (Brookfield, 2012, p70; Jay and Johnson,

2002), and therefore plays a fundamental role in the application of skills for ongoing professional development (Mann et al., 2007), my aims are:

To gain an understanding of how I currently teach and model reflective practice in the public domain, and how I engage with it in private. My intention is that exploring these aims will be a transformative process, furthering my development as a reflective practitioner and facilitator.

My ultimate aim is to enhance my own understanding of the practice and teaching of reflection thereby encourage better student engagement with reflective practice on the course.

Purpose

My purpose is to improve the level of engagement with reflective practice for nutritional therapy practitioners. I seek to do this through examining my own engagement with reflective practice in my capacity as teacher and practitioner. My intention is that exploring these aims will be a transformative process, furthering my development as a reflective practitioner and facilitator. This may then improve attention to reflective practice within the student nutritional therapist environment where I teach. I hope that in the longer term, this may also contribute to the enhancement of reflective practice within the nutritional therapy practitioner community. This is based on empirical evidence that attitude to reflective practice is currently poor amongst professional nutritional therapists, and on published literature that supports the view that good reflexivity runs parallel to good patient care, safer and more autonomous practitioner behaviour and better ability to engage in life-long learning (Bradbury et al., 2010, p2; Ruch, 2005; Mann et al., 2007).

Chapter 2: Knowledge landscape

In order to create a picture of current thinking within my research domain, I engaged with literature relating to reflective practice models within healthcare teaching, experiential learning, and facilitation as a whole person experience. Empirical evidence drawn from my organisation also fed into discoveries made through reviewing literature and provides testimony or contrast to current insights. Literature specific to reflective practice teaching in the sphere of complementary medicine is sparse, with little data relating to nutritional therapy, so my review was centred on reflective practice teaching within mainstream healthcare, particularly nursing. This was chosen due to the abundance of data, and the similarities between the nursing and nutritional therapy in terms of individualised patient care.

The use of reflective practice models in healthcare teaching

In the health professions, reflective practice is seen as a necessity for practitioner competence and ongoing development (Bradbury et al., 2010, p2; Ruch, 2005) and is a core element of healthcare education (Mann et al., 2007). It is considered to be an effective aid to working within illness and disease, where the movement towards individualised treatment plans creates a complex and shifting terrain for the professional to navigate (Simpson and Courtney, 2002).

Whilst nursing and social sciences provide focal points for exploring examples of reflective practice, they also highlight the lack of data on the impact of reflective practice during training. Although a formal requirement of entry to and progression within a healthcare career (Koshy et al., 2017), guidance for educators still rests on little evidence. There is also little centrality for reflective practice teaching – approaches vary across the disciplines and empirical literature does not provide a clear definition or give detail of interventions used (Dubé and Ducharme, 2015). Conclusions that formal reflective practice teaching enhances learning, self-assessment and self-monitoring (Mann et al., 2007) contrast with mixed evidence regarding the correlation between reflective ability and patient care or clinical performance specifically (Embo et al, 2015; Mann et al., 2007). Dubé and Ducharme (2015) noted that although nurses found benefit from applying reflection to clinical practice, no

training had been given to do this inside the clinical setting itself; a picture currently mirrored by the ION student clinic, although ION tutor observations do support findings that draw parallels between higher levels of integrated care and demonstration of reflexivity. Mann et al. (2007) recommended the application of reflective skills to clinical practice specifically, the provision of safe spaces, better modelling and a collaborative approach but concluded that more research was required. Coaching approaches may encourage more meaningful reflection, guiding the learner through a cycle of reflecting within the session itself, and sharing outcomes within a safe environment (Reid, 1993).

Models of reflection may be used to assist students 'to develop an understanding of reflective practice' and choice of models is often guided by learning outcomes (Lucas, 2012, p164). Findings by Dubé and Ducharme (2015) show that most nursing-based reflection tends to use established models such as Schon's reflection-on-action/reflection-in-action, or John's or Gibbs frames of reference. Use of authors such as Mezirow and Boud et al. was described as 'promising' but research is still rudimentary, especially within the clinical setting itself. The use of models can provide the tools that allow the acquisition of reflective skill as the trainee practitioner moves through the stages from novice to expert (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005). However, Coward (2012) argues that healthcare education has made the use of models not only a requirement for reflective thinking, but a compulsory tool in formal assessment with the result that they have come to symbolise a rigid, interrogatory structure on which the student will be judged. Rolfe and Gardner (2006) takes this a step further highlighting criticism of reflective practice in nursing which suggests it may serve as a tool of repressive self-monitoring. Notwithstanding, the value of models may become lost, meaning the graduate is quick to leave them behind. In summary, critical reflection remains a poorly understood and contested subject within the sphere of education, and although beneficial in theory it is complex to put into action in regard to both teaching and learning (Lucas, 2012, p165).

Experiential learning

First conceptualised by 20th century scholars, namely John Dewey and Kurt Lewin, experiential learning is perceived to be a holistic process that encourages active participation from the student as they are guided through intelligently designed experiences

to stimulate learning (Grace et al., 2017). Experiential learning helps develop critical thinking skills (Simpson and Courtney, 2002) and encourages personalised assimilation of knowledge via synergistic interaction with the outside world (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). Experiential learning finds a comfortable home in clinical education where theory has practice as its endgame.

Kolb's framework of experiential learning, first proposed in 1984, provides a suitable encapsulation of ideal clinical training and development. Clinical training involves an initial experience followed by feedback and dialogue that provide multiple perspectives for the learner to draw on to create opportunity for reflection and abstract conceptualisation. The learner is encouraged to grasp the experience and allow it to be transformative (Kolb, 1984, p41) and to test results through active experimentation, often during the next clinical experience. Hickcox's review (1991) of Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) literature found a diverse application of ELT to professions including nursing, where experiential learning techniques are found to be effective in clinical skill acquisition, embedded learning and development of empathy (Hill, 2017; Grace et al., 2017). A review by Grace et al. (2017) found student nurse engagement to be enhanced when simulation is realistic and interaction is non-threatening, taking ethical considerations into account. However, Boud et al. (1985, p8) warn against making assumptions as educators that reflection is occurring amongst our learners and suggests that this might be the hardest step to achieve within Kolb's experiential learning model. With a scaffolding approach, facilitators may encourage the gradual acquisition and application of reflective learning as a result of experiences (Kelsey and Hayes, 2015) but the requirement and expectation that reflection will occur mid-performance (in action) may be incompatible with the challenges the often complex and difficult clinical scenarios present to novice learners (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 2005; Edwards, 2017).

Facilitation as whole personal experience

As illustrated so far, the landscape of education has transformed over the last few decades, particularly within tertiary education and continuing professional development (Heron, 1999, p2). The concept of learners as passive recipients of information is no longer regarded; instead learning has become understood as a personal, autonomous and self-motivated activity with responsibility falling primarily on the learner. Within these changes,

Heron enlarged the concept of facilitation to become an empowering process that invites holistic involvement and participation (Heron, 1999, p1). This invitation to the learner mirrors functional medicine philosophy (upon which nutritional therapy is founded) where the individual is invited to participate fully in their own health journey, and where treatments are whole person focused rather than disease-centred, which is the standard approach in orthodox medicine (Bland, 2015).

Heron latterly concerned himself with the facilitator's role specifically in group learning. Initial bi-polar categorisation of intervention types, although somewhat rudimentary in comparison to later categorisations, draws parallels with observed conflicts in the teacher-learner dynamic at ION. Although research clearly shows that participation enhances learning (Fernandes et al., 2011) ION student feedback can demonstrate a preference for more authoritative interventions and hierarchical modes of teaching (Heron, 1999, p6), almost a need for regression to classroom behaviour learnt in childhood. This poses challenges to reflective practice teaching, which for it to come alive, must be experienced holistically.

In a similar way to the nutritional therapy whole person approach, clinical training lends itself easily to Heron's whole person learning: in the clinical setting, the learner is suddenly aware of their own physicality, emotions and self-belief, understanding of theory and ability to apply it, levels of human compassion and care, prejudices and fears. Can we extract strands of learning from this to improve the facilitation of reflective practice as a whole person experience also? Despite reflective practice being experience based, it has a tendency to sit stubbornly in the realms of theory unless the learner as an individual makes a step to apply it. Schon's 'reflection in action' may provide clues here – facilitating the process of reflection to take place within the moment may awaken the senses and allow the learner to become aware of the 'four territories of experience' (Torbert and Taylor, 2008, p242) pushing the process to become more reflexive. This may develop understanding that every learning experience is holistic when embraced in real time.

Conclusion

There is a wealth of evidence supporting the benefit and need of reflective practice within healthcare education, but literature is mixed leaving questions remaining: what type of intervention is most appropriate? What nature of reflective practice is most effective for learners, particularly in clinical training? Is the use of reflective models a help or a hindrance in healthcare training? Experiential learning is an established and well-regarded method, richly backed by literature, but how can we encourage and facilitate reflection as the outcome to learning by doing? On a course that lends itself to clinical experience, student response highlights the need for reflective practice to 'hang off' the structure of specific experiences and be more explicitly focused on application and practice; how can facilitation as a whole person experience be better used to enhance reflective practice? This research project may contribute in a small way to a better understanding of some of these questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aims

My aims for this project are twofold:

To gain an understanding of how I currently teach and model reflective practice in the public domain, and how I engage with it in private.

To enhance my own understanding of the practice and teaching of reflection and thereby encourage better student engagement with reflective practice on the course.

Objectives

My objectives are as follows:

- 1) to critically engage with my assumptions, ways of thinking and strategies in relation to reflective practice teaching
- 2) to critically engage with my private experience of practising reflection
- 3) to understand students' felt experience of reflective practice and how they feel it may feature in their professional lives
- 4) to apply changes to my approach and practice of reflection within the curriculum

I conducted my research using a first-person action approach and endeavoured to engage in professional experiences as I moved through the academic year with an attitude of inquiry. As a result, primary data has predominantly been acquired via critical self-observation and non-inquisitorial involvement in work-based situations such as teaching and facilitation sessions, conversations with students, teachers and tutors, and engagement with 'critical friends'. These interactions have fed into reflective cycles which provided opportunity for self-examination and subsequent action which was then critically evaluated and reflected upon. I chose a first-person approach because as teacher and module leader I understand myself to be an important cog in the wheels of nutritional therapy teaching at my college. I am aware that how I teach reflective practice may be instrumental in how learners come to believe in, engage with and practise reflection. I am aware of flaws in my own attitude and

approach to reflective practice and wanted to examine these in order to enhance my professional development. I understand also that my reality incorporates and impacts others', and so self-examination and development of my approach had the longer term aim of improving in turn my students' 'reality' (Nicholas and Hathcoat, 2014b, p581) through better adoption of reflective practice skills.

First person action research has been defined by anthropologist Margaret Mead as 'disciplined subjectivity' (Bateson, 1980) or 'critical subjectivity' (Heron and Reason, 1997) and Creswell and Miller (2000) state that credibility is based on various research 'lenses' embedded within different methodologies. The privileged perspective of 'insider researcher' is a lens we can apply to generate our own unique knowledge as we engage with the world around us (Brown, 2010, p67). Although my position within my educational organisation meant that I was well placed to conduct insider research, being 'immersed experientially' (Coghlan, 2003), in my role as teacher I had to maintain an awareness that I was an outsider in the eyes of the students and my role was in partnership with the student community and an observer but not as someone who belonged (Brown, 2010, p71). As an 'insider outsider', using myself therefore as both instrument and subject of my research seemed to be a logical step, even more so because the purpose of my research was better engagement with reflective practice, which ultimately is a journey of the self. I was aware that I needed to walk the line between integrity to self and to my professional role. I also had to surface and acknowledge the temptation to mask my weaknesses as a researcher-practitioner, a symptom of insider research value conflicts outlined by Brannick and Coghlan (2007). This is discussed further in *Reflection*.

In order to promote credibility, I aimed to assume a reflexive stance (Charmaz, 2008, p403), locating myself within the research and acknowledging my position, practising ongoing reflexivity and critical thinking, surfacing assumptions and practising self-disclosure. I attempted to consciously observe my own behaviour, assumptions, beliefs, strategies and intentions in real time (Adams, 2014, p349). Torbert and Bradbury (2008, p6) state that first person action researchers needs 'to act choicefully and with awareness, and to assess effects in the outside world while acting'. Being present and connected to both the inner and outer world as an experience unfolds is challenging, but awareness of models such as Marshall's inner and outer arcs of attention (2016, p54) and the four territories of

experience (Torbert and Taylor, 2008, p242) served as reminders and aids, but it became apparent that this is a discipline not learned quickly and I became aware of tiredness, mental health and workload as factors that impacted on my intellectual and sensory acuity. Although Adams (2014, p351) also emphasises the importance of being present, 'fully immersed' in the moment, he also highlights the need for our senses and our 'chattering', pre-judging minds to be trained. This cautionary and realistic note is supported by Torbert (2001) who reminds us that having the mental discipline to be fully present is not something to assume, and that we must be watchful of our often fickle and ungovernable minds. This is the reality of being human and it does not render the research process any less valid.

In terms of research paradigm, I chiefly adhered to the constructivist approach common within contemporary social sciences (Hershberg, 2014, p182). This philosophy argues that researcher knowledge is a personal and social construct, developed through the individual's interaction with the environment. As well as underpinning research in social sciences, constructivism shares basic assumptions with reflective practice (Osterman, 1998), and like reflective practice, it is pluralistic, contextual and engenders action (Creswell and Miller, 2000) which I found to be a neat dovetailing of the two. From a personal perspective, my background interests in post-modernism, spirituality and reflective journalling mean I easily embraced the constructivist paradigm and concur with the view that reflective practice is a tool for defining reality in a way that most promotes self in order 'to live one's life most fruitfully, valuably, and justly with others' (Torbert and Taylor, 2008, p240). However, in the spirit of action research, I permitted myself to be open to draw on other paradigms such as critical thinking, autoethnography and related methods when appropriate. Davids (2014, p350) argues that first person action research is methodologically pluralist. As instrument of research, the researcher can and should draw on various tools to suit inquiry and this was the freedom I allowed myself to have.

I documented experiences as they unfurled or as soon as possible afterwards. I later re-visited the notes I had initially taken, and re-wrote these in full, with the addition of new retrospective reflections. Keeping and then re-visiting notes is a technique that can be used to ensure quality processes in first person inquiry, a process in which the researcher opens awareness to and looks for emergent patterns and themes that may not have initially occurred to them. I employed skills honed through journalling that run parallel with

elements of Freefall writing (Turner-Vesselago, 2017) and thick description to contribute to the validity of my research processes (Cresswell and Miller, 2000). Writing in a free-flowing form allowed my thoughts to take shape and new ones to emerge. My approach towards writing unintentionally finds parallels with Barbara Turner-Vesselago's Freefall writing: I write without a plan (2017, p29) and without edits (2017, p31), about what presses on my mind, and I allow the writing to take me on its own path. I 'go fearward' (2017, p34), often writing about things that scare me, entangle me, energise me. Writing the retrospective accounts served as a type of conversation with myself – looking at the same event from a different perspective: the event at first seen and relayed with fresh eyes and first impressions, and then engaged in anew with hindsight and a different voice. This checking-in process fed the action research cycle of planning, acting/creating change, observing/data gathering, evaluating and reflecting which informed the planning of subsequent steps; loosely based on Lewin's action reflection cycle (Hill, 2014, p233).

Although the design of action research is predominantly uniquely situationally constructed, ensuring internal and external validity is paramount (Creswell and Miller, 2000) in order for strategies that may emerge to be useful and transferable (Nicholas and Hathcoat, 2014a, p304). As previously mentioned, applying the 'lens of the researcher', returning to data to engage in sense-making through the adoption of a reflexive stance promotes validity (Creswell and Miller, 2000), but in the belief that reality is a social construction, drawing on an external third parties including 'friends willing to act as friends' (Marshall and Reason, 1993, p122) or 'friends willing to act as enemies' (Torbert, 1976, p169) provided another research lens and shed light on assumptions and behaviours, encouraging self-disclosure. Reason and Bradbury (2008, p7) draw attention to working with inquiry partners as another way to ensure quality and integrity – crafting research in a transparent and articulate way. I had identified a work colleague with whom I formed a critical friend rapport – I had been mindful of power dynamics (Marshall, 2016, p62) when choosing and of skillset to encourage my own 'personal growth under the direction of an enlightened guide' (Rolfe and Gardner, 2006). Discussing incidents with my critical friend brought a new layer of perspective to my reflective accounts, helped me to be attentive to my data, challenged me, and facilitated the drawing out of explanations. In this way I sought to achieve authenticity; a hallmark of quality in first person action research (Coghlan, 2014, p69).

Outside of my sessions with my critical friend I also sought the opinion of others to ascertain whether the narrative of what I participated in was truthful for those involved in the experience with me. I drew on the opinions of students regarding their interpretation of facilitation sessions or teaching sessions or whether I was accurately understanding their view of reflective practice (communicative validation) (Altrichter et al., 2005, p131). Students were made aware that I was anonymously drawing on teaching sessions, conversations and other relevant interactions to aid my research on my own performance and relevant written consent was acquired when necessary. I took care to emphasise to stakeholders that my research was focused on my practice, and that they should be free in the expression of their thoughts. I was also able to share my accounts, planning and outcomes with fellow reflective practice lecturers, and with clinic tutors who were working with me on the delivery of my module material. Feedback gained from these colleagues further enriched my reflective practice journey and helped me to evaluate new ideas and interventions as they happened. I warmly welcomed other practitioners' experience and knowledge (Yoak and Brydon-Miller, p309) and invited honesty and challenge (MacFarlane, 2009). Transparency of intentions towards those with whom I worked helped assure good faith and trustworthiness (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011, p96).

Chapter 4: Project activity

As a first-person action research project, my data gathering essentially revolved around events within the normal rhythms of the ION academic year (see academic calendar – appendix 1). My intention was to approach normal events with an attitude of critical inquiry, therefore allowing timetabled teaching and assessment sessions to yield data and inform my learning seemed logical. Anticipated events included the visiting of an external speaker specialised in reflective practice, the opportunity to observe the introductory session to reflective practice in year one, assessment of student personal development portfolios, and the planning and delivery of a clinical practice module with special focus on reflective practice teaching. I expected these scheduled events and activities to start a series of action-reflection cycles that I would engage with and add to as long as they retained a natural life. This meant I was able to enter the situations with a deliberate attitude of inquiry and an openness to how the session would unfold. I engaged organically with my environment, which led to rich conversations with lecturers, students and tutors both inside and outside of planned events, in addition to active teaching and observation.

Both staff and stakeholders were made aware that I was drawing on teaching sessions, conversations and other relevant interactions to aid my research, and written consent was acquired where appropriate (see Participation Information Sheet and Consent form: appendices 2 and 3). I worked within our organisation's code of conduct and took care to emphasise to stakeholders that my research was focused on my practice, not their performance. When relevant, I shared my written reflections with those involved and requested consent to use the accounts in my research. Sharing reflective accounts was not only in order to increase validity (Altrichter et al., 2005, p131) but also as a gesture of respect and collaboration toward the people I was working with. I employed anonymisation or pseudonymisation by default unless given consent to do otherwise. Transparency of intentions towards those with whom I worked were employed in order to encourage good faith and trustworthiness (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011, p96).

I aimed to capture primary data as close to the event as possible. At times when I was present in capacity of an observer, I was able to take notes contemporaneously; allowing my thoughts to bounce off what was being said, to scribble down tangential contemplations, to

ask myself questions, or add reminders to myself to research certain areas. If I had a more active involvement in the session, for example if I was teaching or engaging in conversations, I captured my thoughts as soon as possible after the event, and aimed to do this by the following day. Capturing the experience whilst fresh is important in order to gain first impressions, feelings and reactions (Embo et al, 2015). Writing is the presentational form I am most drawn to, and so I decided to hand write notes in favour of voice recording. As a lecturer, listening to voice or video recordings is bound up with ideas of critiquing my public speaking skills – associations that I didn't want when reflecting. Furthermore, our external lecturer had advocated notes taken by hand, as detailed in my journal:

Steve talked about the value of an activity taking longer – we act too fast for our minds to process sometimes and life is speeding up causing great stress. I guess even in my reflections I tend to mimic this emotional illness – voice recording or typing is faster, more economic. But are economy and efficiency compatible with deep reflection?

After writing my initial reflections by hand, I typed them up after some time had passed. This transference of notes from paper to digital form served to re-iterate the verbalisation of my experience, as well as give opportunity to re-visit my thoughts from a more distant perspective, with cooler feelings and other ways of seeing things – more leisure to think around issues and add this layering to my existing reflection (Marshall and Mead, p239). I would again re-visit intermittently to allow myself time to consider the areas that had arisen and give further thought. When reflection concerned an individual, particularly the external lecturers, I sent them my reflective piece to gain consent but also invite their participation, which added significant richness to my reflections – providing an exchange of perspectives.

Drawing on thoughts and responses from the student body was of course a key source of data. Within this I needed to maintain the awareness that I was observing and reflecting on my interactions with a group of people from the same demographic as me, whom over time I was building a familiarity, friendliness and synergy with, but whom I could never be a part of and which altered the way I was perceived (Herr and Anderson, 2015, p44). It was not going to be possible to blend in unnoticed – my presence arriving at the edge of a group discussion was noted, the dynamic subtly shifting. Conversations would always be tutor to student, no matter how hard I tried to be casual and friendly. This awareness underpinned

the data I gained from spending time with the student cohorts; despite them understanding the nature of my research project there would be some reservation in conversations with me: because I am still their teacher and assessor this could leave a latent fear of judgement (Shah, 2004, p. 569) potentially leading to the presentation of a distorted image that conformed to my perceived views (Mercer, 2007). 'People's willingness to talk to you, and what people say to you, is influenced by who they think you are' (Drever, 1995, p31). Despite these considerations, maintaining transparency and engaging in gentle conversation encouraged honesty and frankness amongst the student population gave me helpful insights.

I also engaged in dialogue with my peers and colleagues, which included reflective conversations with our visiting lecturer, the Dean, the Head of Clinics, and clinic tutors who attended and helped me in my training days. Many of these conversations were unplanned and impromptu and most were rich in terms of helping my thinking and formulating my next steps. More formally and regularly (approximately once a month) I met with my critical friend in order to deepen and modify understanding. I shared a piece of reflection with her before our session, and this formed the basis for our reflective discussion. I chose reflection that weighed on me the most at that time or that I felt I would like to discuss with for ideas moving forward. Talking with my critical friend Sally helped me to identify patterns, challenge my thought processes and to find solutions. Marshall (2016, p56) discusses the role of speaking thoughts out loud in the process of inquiry, that a verbalisation reveals timber in speech that points to where energy lies, or where there is something to uncover. Sally was skilled at experiential knowing and she observed and noted the way I said things, the turns of phrase that I used and drew on these strands when appropriate, employing empathy and perception. Sally is newer to the organisation than me so was well placed to challenge any myopia that can be symptomatic of familiarity (Mercer, 2007). I made records of our conversations in the same way as I did with teaching activities – immediate note taking, later a writing up. With her perspective in mind, I then completed a third re-visiting of previous reflective accounts that we had discussed together. As I wrote and re-visited events I also turned to literature to bring in another perspective to my reflections. This process was guided by awareness of Brookfield's four lenses of critical thinking (Brookfield,

2002) . Over time I built my reflective pieces in this way: an initial account, retrospective re-visiting, discussion with a critical friend, turning to literature.

Once the action reflection cycles were started, they took on a life of their own – gaining or losing momentum. This was allowed and not forced, and whilst a topic or reflective strand held natural energy, or ‘when something [was] at stake’ (Marshall, 2016, p46) they were pursued both in private contemplation and in critical conversations. Through the conversations and experiences mentioned above, new actions naturally emerged, many of which were implemented at the next available opportunity and then reflected on. Other actions were more suited to the longer term and their implementation would sit outside the scope of this project – either later in the academic year or from the start of the new one. Although the action reflection cycles remained discrete entities, there was inevitably overlap as themes emerged, were identified and actions were agreed at times elsewhere on the course (for example as a result of reflecting on a Year Three teaching session, I made changes to Year Two delivery). Most of the action reflection cycles ran concurrently, shedding light on patterns and assumptions that arose from different experiences and yet often dovetailed in terms of the message behind them.

Personal challenges

Capturing my thoughts and feelings over this period gave a reality to the impact of filters on how we experience and interpret events, and on how present we can be in the moment. Post-modern philosophy argues that there is no perception without perspective (Adams, 2014, p352) and this became real for me. At times, I struggled with my mental health, or I suffered from preoccupations or tiredness which felt like a handicap or a hindrance: I was not as present as I had meant to be; I saw the world that day in monochrome; I was bothered and affected by personal or professional circumstances. In one journal entry I write:

Unfortunately, I hadn't had much sleep the night before and was irritated by my drifting mind when I wanted to be acutely present. I wanted to put into practise what I'd read regarding Marshall's inner and outer arcs of attention (2016, p54). I was also aware that the next day would be very intense, when I would be acting as host to

thirteen supplement and testing companies – this played on my mind and unsettled my concentration.

A later journal entry witnesses my research whilst grappling with poor mental health:

I often depend on bursts of energy: I wait for them, hovering low. Suddenly I feel the energy coming, like a glider encountering a thermal, and I soar up. The problem with this is what do I do in times of low energy? And the last year has contained a lot of them, with professional and personal losses. Lately I have felt on the edge of depression, and this saps my energy and debilitates me. Reflecting on this with Sally made me think about filters and perception. A researcher struggling with depression is a researcher with a certain filter on her perception; 'For now we see in a mirror, darkly' (1 Corinthians 13:12). Studies have shown depression causes visual disturbances: the world loses colour and looks greyer (Costandi, 2013). This is a good analogy of the presence of a filter between oneself and the world. And the students I teach have similar challenges. As year leader I have frequent calls from students struggling with ill health, bereavement, marriage difficulties. Our state of mind is a filter on our processing information, seeing the world, reflecting. Reflection is fair enough when you have the time mapped out or you are in the right mood. But what about the times when you're feeling all wrong in yourself, or you are pressed for time?

Marshall also asks 'Can I inquire 'well' if I am tired, depressed, unwell? If I call myself to inquiry am 'I' there and willing and able?' (2016, p68). She goes on to suggest that inquiry is ours to do no matter what the situation but that it will inevitably be informed by the inquirer's state of being at that time. However, when the mind is dulled or depressed, discipline of process becomes a challenge (2016, p68). Steps may be slower, smaller or more mechanistic, and the need for protective boundary-setting may grow. Accepting that 'Life is no ideal, ...attentions are always fragmented to some extent' (2016, p68) and proceeding carefully nonetheless is part of the paradigm of first person inquiry.

The challenge of change

As lecturer and module leader, I have always been receptive to conversations with students, but in doing research I found myself in the position of proactively seeking conversation with

them as informants. This seeking out of conversations outside and around formal teaching highlighted to me the lack of free time available to spend in dialogue with students. As a part time course, the curriculum needs to be efficiently and densely organised, and once a month contact means little availability for free-flowing interaction, which was a hindrance to my data gathering – the small opportunities vulnerable to interruption or being passed by. In the third year of the course, I had already developed rapport with the cohort, and I was able to talk with them from a basis of good rapport which nurtured trust. With the year below I had not been able to build a rapport, being new to the group, but time constraints meant rapport building was sacrificed to some extent in favour of the need to gather data. It made me consider how well rapport is developed between module leaders and students across the course in general and how a lack of this may impact on learning and skills acquisition (Johnson and LaBelle, 2017).

I had anticipated lack of flexibility regarding potential changes and recommendations I might make due to the framework of the part time course that aligns with the National Occupational Standards underpinning the qualification and the profession. However, as I moved through the research process and began to think creatively, I was able to find ways to use the time I had more efficiently. Another element of surprise came during my research to realise that I was gaining a particularly sharp insight into issues involved in assessment of reflective practice, not solely from engaging in assessment as a tutor, but more pertinently from engaging in it as a student myself. Issues of vulnerability, privacy and subjectivity in assessment arose from my own journey as much as from observing the journey of others. I sometimes wondered if my incidences chosen, ‘sometimes seem banal . . . making a big fuss out of nothing . . . making a fool of myself . . . it is too self-centred’ (Marshall and Mead, 2005, p275) and furthermore an awareness that my research sat within a professional context, which would continue long beyond my research project, considerations that are echoed by Preedy and Riches (1988, p. 221) who say ‘problems of tempering the truth in the knowledge that fruitful professional relationships ... [have] ... to continue after the research had been completed.’ The challenge therefore was to ensure my reflection was fair and conclusions and outcomes were reasonable, justified and useful to my professional role and the organisation whilst endeavouring to maintain my academic freedom and personal integrity (McNiff and Whitehead, 2011, p96). This is discussed more in *Reflection*.

The danger of learning how to adopt an attitude of inquiry regarding normal events in order to inform research is that it becomes a way of living, inseparable from life (Reason, 2018, Scott, 1985, p. 120), 'a shift in someone's sense of self' (Marshall, 2016, p44). Over time the researcher may become a more inquiring, braver and reflexive person – seeking learning from situations, asking difficult questions, uncovering things hidden. In terms of delineating a research project, this new stance means that data production is unending – material is difficult to limit and continues to be created even as findings are written. Furthermore, the data stretches across many domains more or less suitable for human consumption, possibly 'violating the rules about what should be told in public' (Marshall and Mead, 2005, p275). The challenge of the first-person action researcher is what to select and what to omit and returning to the aims of the project and critical friends is key in finding guidance and remaining focused.

Chapter 5: Project findings

Since analysis of the data I accrued was meant to inform implementation of new approaches to the curriculum as well as create better understanding in myself as practitioner, how it was interpreted is important. I returned to accrued data and reviewed themes, narrative and structure: 'validity as reflexive accounting' (Atheide and Johnson, 1994, p489). This discipline enabled me to re-visit memories with a critical eye, and within these memories I invited commentary from my critical friend. My criteria for making sense of the data was the expectation of a gradual and traceable movement towards my research aims. Due to research being based on action-reflection cycles, results were not archived to be interpreted at the end but were analysed in an ongoing way prior to the summative phase, not only to draw out patterns but to inform next steps. Many of the smaller steps were actioned and in turn evaluated, feeding into the ongoing cycle as illustrated in *Changes to Practice*.

Critical examination of data analysis was important to avoid seeing what I wanted to see, and to avoid overlooking unexpected themes. Contrasting findings and conclusions against published literature helped make sense of my own explorations and ensured that they did not sit in isolation, but instead were contextually embedded (Altrichter et al., 2005, p74). In the same way, drawing on multiple intelligences and ways of knowing (Adams, 2014, p350) in the form of dialogic inquiry with third parties and critical friends helped to shed light on whether the data suggested my aims were being achieved and whether my critical reflections were taking me down new and unexpected but also valuable routes (see appendix 4 for an example). 'Of course, the whole of the mind could not be reported in a part of the mind' (Bateson, 1973, p. 408); key to the process of interpretation was the awareness that self-reflection even drawing on multiple perspectives is still incomplete and inevitably takes an abductive tone. Employing these methods helped themes take on their own life, patterns to emerge, which facilitated surprise and allowed new understandings (Altrichter et al., 2005, p122). As Altrichter et al. (2005, p135) state, patterns 'select and interpret data', the results of which are outlined below. Direct quoting of diary entries is intended to provide illustrations to give evidence of patterns discovered and the development of conclusions, 'hopefully retaining some vitality of its origins' (Marshall, 2016, p109).

The themes below were drawn from analysis of my primary data:

Use of models in reflective practice teaching

As in all teaching of reflective practice in healthcare courses, use of reflective models intersperses the teaching and provides a backbone for application (Kelsey and Hayes, 2015). As such, its emergence as a salient theme to my inquiry merited a depth of analysis.

Tussles with models

Approaching the planning and delivery of my modules with a greater attitude of inquiry surfaced long lasting tussles I had with reflective models, their purpose and their use. This topic surfaced regularly in my own private musings and in my talks with my critical friend. I considered that as I reflect in private, I do not base my reflections on models anymore, but tacitly know that I need to describe, then move deeper in order to ultimately step forward. I tend to reflect in a fluid, 'stream of consciousness' style and this at least superficially seems to conflict with what models are demanding. I came to gradually surface strong feelings about the use of models, I realised that the choice they present me seemed drab, my freedom felt curtailed, my creativity curbed. As one student commented: 'Reflection takes place anyway. Why does it need to be formalised?' Through talking to my critical friend, Sally I realised I actually felt angry about the models. I wrote in my journal:

I don't like the formula, I don't like the box, I don't like the well-trodden path that endless folks tread. I don't want to be told I have to. Am I being told I have to?

In her paper, Lucas (p.163, 2012) criticises current teaching approaches that communicate models to students in a technique-focused way rather than outlining the value of them. Coward (2011) also argues that models in healthcare teaching can be used to such an extent that they actually restrict our thinking – and this of course was never the idea. During his teaching session, our external lecturer Steve commented on the Gibbs' model as being 'badly used often', I questioned him about what he meant by this and his answer concurred with Coward's – badly used means focusing on the process rather than the principles that allow transformative learning, new ways of practising, or a conscious anchoring of identified good practice. My own observations, particularly when marking assessments, provide further support of this - that a common misunderstanding amongst the student population

is that the steps are chronological. We must start with descriptive, which sits in one paragraph, then the next paragraph talks about how we felt, and it goes from there. The model is used almost as an essay plan. As Lucas (p.163, 2012) comments, reflection should not be prescriptive, but students should learn the skill of reflecting via models in order to develop their own styles further down the path. Sally likened applying a model to using a recipe – it can form the basic framework but we are free to elaborate, add in and take out. These analogies suggest that models should be used as part of a scaffolding approach (Kelsey and Hayes, 2015), built up around the emerging knowledge structure. I would argue that scaffolding and the structure are not integrally connected, one supports the other and is designed to be taken down and discarded once the structure is firm enough. Perhaps this is what I personally have done: kicked away the scaffolding.

The graphic representation of many reflective models may contribute to their misuse – what looks like steps is actually more a progressive layering and could be better represented as such. Identifying the stepwise nature of models and how they can fall foul to prescriptive use both in teaching and learning helped me to better understand my natural reaction to them, and gave me clues to better intellectual appreciation of models that could lead to better teaching and guidance. The realisation was important, however, the conundrum remained about how to give reflective practice value in the students' minds and how to use reflective models as tools to do that. I observed the usual sheepish looks and chuckles when Steve asked the students if they used reflective models. I worried that my ongoing tussles with the appreciation of models have seeped through in my teaching, and that I don't bring them alive in the way I should. Steve agreed that this could be the case. In my journal, I wonder:

They say 'a bad workman blames his tools' so the students' poor understanding a reflection of my poor workmanship? If I have badly used models in the past, only to discard them, then how can I appreciate their true worth?

My dilemma was that I had discarded models, I don't enjoy using them, yet I have to teach them. I am responsible for introducing students to reflective practice at a level where models are needed. How do I do this effectively? How do I prepare people to then move beyond this and embrace principles? I consider Dilts' logical levels of change (Dilts, 2014)

and how behaviour increases capability which enables us to see value. Following this model means asking students to apply it early, often and regularly, and concurrently to theoretical teaching rather than after the theory seems adequately completed.

The beauty of models

In my reflective journey, I was also able to draw out strands of appreciation for the role of models in our self-development. In the written words of one student, 'approaching learning as a 'staged' or cyclical process in which each experience is transformed, and a story is constructed in the interface between expectation and experience, offers opportunity for experimentation and evolution of ideas'. I wrote:

I tend to shy away from reflecting on difficult experiences; I don't want to relive the experience, and I don't want to hear the answers. 'It took me a long time to realise that there are two kinds of writing; the one you write and the one that writes you. The one that writes you is dangerous. You go where you don't want to go. You look where you don't want to look.' (Winterson, 2012). A reflective model can hold your hand through this process and guide you through – one step at a time. It can say to you 'you don't need to go through this, confront this fear, re-live this upset or hear the answer, all you need to do is just take this first step – describe what happened factually, that's all you need to do for now' and on.

The choice of model may change depending on need, as Steve said 'it may be useful to explore methods of reflection that allow you to step away for a period while the discomfort subsides' such as Tripp's guidelines (Tripp, 1993) or working on Rogerian Core Concepts (for example, unconditional positive regard) to enhance self-acceptance and encourage growth (Betz et al., 1995). I see that reflective models also provide us with a framework to save us from over-thinking – from those looping thoughts processes that don't go anywhere. Models push on to the next step, with the final step meaning action. Action in itself changes things. The looping thoughts can't remain the same, not exactly the same anyway. Models take us on the journey. They chair our thought processes.

Moving forward

Sally asked me ‘What might it be like to try a different way of reflecting and see what I discover?’ I don’t want to go ‘back to basics’ and re-apply myself to using models – to pick old ones up from where they were discarded, and plod through them step by step. Lucas (2012, p165) argues that models are not obligatory for all practitioners to follow once confident in the process of reflection – which is a freeing opinion. However, I would suggest that to teach them there needs to be a familiarity of use. Instead I propose to use models in a new way inside my private practice with the intention of increasing my appreciation of them and as a result my delivery. Rather than use the models as a guide to take me through each step, use them as a check list (such as Gibbs) *after* the initial stage of reflective writing has been completed – as a form of quality control. That way I can be free to write creatively whilst ensuring that I still reach evaluation, analysis and a proactive conclusion. At the same time, I develop a new working relationship with them. In terms of my own self-development as a reflective practitioner, the concept of surfacing assumptions and gaining multiple perspectives has always resonated with me, and drawing on Mezirow’s levels and related literature will challenge me to deepen my reflection further.

Concurring with my reflections on Dilts’ levels and the building of value, Steve emphasised that ‘getting students to get it’ comes through doing it; at his university students reflect within the format of a group supervision before theory is even introduced. Like any skill, you pick up the tools and ‘have a go’. Experience then embeds and brings life to the theories which take on value and resonance. A sense of value cannot be gained by viewing something externally, it is gained from experience, from picking up the tools and applying them (Brookfield, 2012, p73). At first this realisation frustrated me because I felt that it is by very nature the tools of reflective practice that take the flowing, personal expression of self and put it in a box. However, the concept of asking the learners to pick up the tools and ‘have a go’ was new and experimental, and would yield interesting results, which led me to consider its integration into the curriculum. Implementation and application emerging from this reflective process will be discussed in *Changes to Practice*.

Student experience

Over the duration of my research activity, I observed or taught sessions in all three years of the course and engaged with groups of students with whom I had different levels of familiarity and rapport. As commented in *Project Activity*, I found that rapport was an enhancing factor in data gathering. I reflected on my meeting with a group I hadn't met before:

I felt aware that we were strangers to each other and that I did not have enough credit with them to be able to engage them in conversation and expect open responses. I felt that the need for rapport of some kind, fostering trust, was integral to the process of dialogue. As such, I was led by my intuition on the matter and decided to spend the session observing.

At the other end of the spectrum was the final year group who I already knew quite well, and the contrast between this group and the first in the ease of dialogue was evident. Purposeful interaction with the various student groups was both confirming and disconfirming to my established beliefs that student engagement with reflective practice was poor.

Evidence to support this was:

- 1) The allocation of 'the graveyard shift' for the 'Introduction to reflective practice' on the course. The end of the intensive weekend sees attendance students typically start leaving to catch trains and tend to children's bed time needs. Live stream viewers dropped from seventeen to just seven as the reflective practice session began. This could have been accounted for by family commitments in the home environment also, or because there was a natural break and change of speaker, but the overall impression was that lower priority was given both by staff and students to this subject, which may risk sending a message from the outset that reflective practice is simply an after-thought.
- 2) Many of the students felt that they were too busy to reflect and that it naturally took a backseat as an optional activity, despite apparently having a good understanding of its

purpose. Students observed that in a general sense self-care is sacrificed when we are stressed and busy or just about coping, and reflective practice is part of this.

3) Although students are not resisting reflective practice as much as I had assumed, they still don't do it. They see the purpose but don't prioritise it, because they see it as optional, a luxury, something way down on the list, they sacrifice self-care and even if they didn't, reflecting wouldn't necessarily be seen as an important part of that. They appear to understand the point intellectually, but do not know the value.

4) One student approached me to tell me how much she hated reflective practice. She said she simply hated thinking about herself, she found it a vast waste of time. She was happy to describe a scenario, but she actively rebelled against analysing it. She struggled with a conflict between who she is as a person and the academic demands put on her by the course in terms of reflective practice, which provides an illustration of problems with the assessment of reflective practice as identified in literature (Kelsey and Hayes, 2015) and resonated with my own experiences which are discussed under *Reflection*.

Evidence that questioned my belief that student engagement is poor is as follows:

1) Year one students in attendance were engaged at the first reflective practice lecture and provided thoughtful responses and plentiful interaction. Others commented on how much they had enjoyed it when they were leaving.

2) Year three learners responded well to our visiting lecturer, Steve, and engaged fully in small group reflection. The students particularly responded to the Borton model which appears to be a good entry point into group reflective practice (also confirmed by Steve). Jasper (2003, p99) also endorses this model for students or novice practitioners to facilitate analysis of their emerging practice.

3) Some year three learners were opting for the use of simple models to help them review experiences and 'sort their heads out' and others said they found using prospective reflection helpful.

4) The students and I participated with enthusiasm during our discussion on curriculum changes to support reflective learning and agreed on the need for a 'little and often' approach and talked about how retrospectively group reflection could have been woven

into the role play module. The general feeling about Steve's sessions was that they would be more useful earlier in the course – this was an interesting observation because Steve himself has commented that the material he brings sits within his first year of teaching, and so to move this earlier in our course could be beneficial for a better layering of understanding and particularly application. See *Changes to Practice*.

5) It was particularly nice to have one online year three student express to me her love of reflective practice. Her friend said, 'everyone should do reflective practice (but no one does)'.

I was struck by the idea that students may understand the benefit of reflecting, and even see it as a contributory factor in their wellbeing, but they are still too busy to engage in it. This again suggests a lack of understanding of its value. It made me return to Dilts' logical levels. Robert Dilts suggests that sustainable change will only occur as a result of changes on more than one level (Dilts, 2014). Reflective practice teaching targets action (behaviours) with the view that these feed down into a positive outcome for the student. We encourage the behaviour of reflective practice (and use models) in order to build the student's skillset thus encouraging change higher up also. Is this how value can be taught? How can we teach someone to value something? By doing and seeing? By sharing our valuing of something? We need to see change at the level of value for this to become a life-long learning tool. Clues in my conversations and reflections with learners help me to develop an idea of how a sense value might be gained, from the practical doing which leads to appreciation and from seeing others value it (Brookfield, 2012, p55).

Authenticity

Throughout my research project I struggled with emotions, a feeling of inadequacy, self-pity, frustration. But in contrast to all of this was a deep sense of confidence and trust in the art and discipline of reflexivity. One thing I grappled with was how to be authentic when teaching methods that I had not personally had a positive experience of – such as group reflection - or methods I did not fundamentally like, such as reflective models. After talking to Steve, I write:

He explained how he trains his students – giving guidance in their regular supervision sessions and slowly then stepping away. I feel sad that I have not had a good

experience of group supervision, and now I teach reflective practice without experiencing the value of this. It has almost definitely informed my reflective practice teaching – in that supervision isn't something I've purposely omitted, it is something that hasn't been a priority to include. I've made teaching decisions based on experience and emotions, and on what's been done before, rather than on literature and peer recommendation. Reflective practice takes place quietly in my little isolated world as I spill feelings out on paper and sift through them for gold.

I wondered whether there were other ways to acquire authenticity except via experientially knowing. I know that authenticity is needed in order to embody my practice, and the embodiment of practice is authenticity itself; according to one study it is 'the constant process of becoming that deepen[s] their understanding of themselves and others' (Ramezanzadeh et al., 2017). Authenticity is ownership of practice and the development of self and allowing the two to intertwine. Another study lists authenticity in teaching as having awareness of self and others, relationship with learners and a critically reflective approach to practice (Cranton and Carusetta, 2004). Johnson and LaBelle (2017) support the forging of connections with students as a mark of authenticity as well as having a caring and approachable nature, a passion for the subject, and a willingness to show our humanity which includes admitting our mistakes; essentially being real and genuine not only about the material taught but in a way that saturates the teaching. Looking at myself in Bassot's full length mirror, I see that I already demonstrate authenticity. I know my understanding, valuing and appreciation of reflective practice is genuine. One piece of student feedback I have received in the past said 'Emma empowers people. She educates, guides, supports, and gives TIME to her students - she is simultaneously firm, clear and encouraging.' This has also been confirmed at different times by my critical friend, who said that my zest for and commitment to reflection became apparent as I spoke, that the lecture she watched came from 'me' and was genuine. She highlighted how I talked about reflective practice allowing us to be fully ourselves and to be able to bring more of 'us' to the table, and she added to this, saying how greater self-awareness means we are freer to be who we are in all situations, including professional ones. I know I demonstrate authenticity in the principles and values of reflective practice, but when I swap mirrors to analyse in more detail, I know I lack authenticity when it comes to some of the tools and techniques. The question is, how

therefore do I demonstrate this? If positive personal experience of something specific is lacking, then how else can authenticity be acquired? Through literature? Through other peoples' recommendations and wisdom? Through believing these things, applying them and seeing?

As discussed earlier on in *Findings*, I can appreciate the uses of reflective models, and see intellectually their purpose. I rebel against their rigidity, their linear process, but I support their use as a tool as the learner progresses. If I see models as scaffolding around a structure that I believe in, I can teach the models with authenticity. I can hope to model the structure that these models can create over time – a reflective practitioner, an authentic teacher.

Critical reflection and personal responsibility

There are many pitfalls that a well-meaning reflective practice teacher may fall into, and many bumps in the road for the learner. I understand that my role is not only to guide students through the stages of skills acquisition (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 2005) and to encourage them to view their behaviour critically (Love and Guthrie, 1999 p72), but to communicate the *value* of reflection, which requires the externalisation of my tacit knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Jay and Johnson (2002) state that 'it is difficult for novices to learn about what their instructors fail to describe', and previously I have tried to communicate value by repeatedly reinforcing the subject's content grammar (Peters, 1973), not recognising that actually the learners are ready to start to embody their learning almost from day one, to 'jump in without knowing what he needs to learn' (Schon, 1988, p93).

Efforts as teachers to encourage the picking up of tools may lead to formulaic teaching, a tendency which can inadvertently cause rigidity in the reflective process (Coward, 2011). This is in part encouraged by learners who as advanced beginners request specific instructions (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 2005) which don't easily lead to authenticity of self-expression, or understanding of complexity (Jay and Johnson, 2002). The requirement of regular journal keeping may also become a problem: entries are often postponed due to time pressures, and the act of writing can become a chore, leading to a more descriptive and less reflective approach (Burton, 1999). This in turn may strip the discipline of its inherent value. The same vulnerability applies to the necessity of assessment, students may feel required to expose their flaws to be picked over (Kelsey and Hayes, 2015); 'often they hide the truth in their writing for fear of being professionally judged on what actually

happened.... This removing of elements of their experience is surely stifling their reflection on pertinent situations for their learning and knowledge gathering?’ (Coward, 2011).

Although it is worth noting that these sentiments did not emerge via my conversations with ION students, it is important to have an awareness of this risk as teacher and assessor.

And so, the challenge of imparting understanding of value and the complexity of reflection balanced with the learner’s need is not unique to me, but to all teachers of reflection (Jay and Johnson, 2002). Thinking back to myself as student of Nutritional Therapy and when I encountered reflective practice as a formal discipline, I too retained the common belief that the discipline of reflection detracted from all the other things I had to get done. A serious critical incident in training clinic provided the pivotal point that developed in me an appreciation of reflection and I turned to reflection using the models I had been taught in order to help me process the experience. They enabled me to pick myself up and move forward rather than give up, and in doing so, I started to understand their value. It was the choice between giving up or developing and moving on that brought me to understand the practice, and this observation suggests that reflection will become ‘real’ when it is finally approached out of need.

Identifying techniques to apply, such as modelling, and application via group work is key to improved student outcome (Brookfield, 2012, p55). But at the same time, I have realised that there is no forcing to be done. I know that as teacher I have tried to force, I have tried too hard, efforts based on my assumptions of what students are thinking. Marshall comments that the question as to whether individuals can actually contribute to other people’s development has been a common theme for her (2016, p50). As adult learners, developing critical reflection is ultimately their responsibility, not mine. This realisation permits me to be enthusiastic without feeling pressure to be persuasive, I can seek to draw out value from the models I teach, and I can intelligently employ methods of teaching that have been shown to be most effective and adapt these to the time constraints of the course, and the rest, well the rest is for them. Steve commented ‘I find that being permissive rather than being authoritarian works really well to increase engagement., i.e. not *telling* students that they *must* reflect all the time, and rather supporting them in the doing a tiny bit when they can and building it into all my teaching (where possible).’ For me this summarises a good approach.

Chapter 6: Changes to Practice and Recommendations

Changes to practice, actions and recommendations as a result of this research project have aligned closely with my aims and objectives which have been achieved in a complete sense for the purposes of the project, and in a partial and ongoing sense for the purposes of my development as a teacher and reflective practitioner, and for the enhancement of practitioner training on the course. This chapter gives an account of short-term actions that have been implemented so far as a result of the findings. It then goes on to outline longer-term changes to practice (planned actions) and lastly recommendations are given.

Implementation of changes to practice so far: action-reflection cycle

Findings conclude that the application of reflective practice in the classroom setting, particularly in small group settings, can increase appreciation of reflection (Brookfield, 2012, p55), and should run alongside rather than follow theory-based teaching. As a result, activities to this effect were introduced a year earlier than normal (within the role play based clinical practice module in Year Two). The expectation was that experience of group reflective practice would act as a 'taster' before the external lecturer's supervision training, which would add a new layer of learning to the students' growing skills and allow them more luxury of time to give to engage in a full supervision session. Tutors were briefed in advance, and on the day, learners were required to:

- 1) complete 5 minutes of prospective reflection before their role play session and to share this with their group
- 2) audio record feedback at the end of their session to allow them to re-visit at a later opportunity
- 3) engage in a short supervision/group reflection session at the end of each of their role play sessions using the Borton model. This was intended to be tutor led as far as possible.

In addition, our external lecturer was re-scheduled to the same group later in the academic year.

The above points were implemented on the first lecture day, and feedback from clinical tutors involved in these sessions was solicited afterwards. The responses I received

suggested that the use of the Borton model contributed to a potentially more supportive feedback session than in previous role plays, although tutor opinion was mixed. One tutor stated 'They all seemed to understand what it was driving at and were able to articulate their thought processes. As there wasn't much time for a more in-depth analysis, I think the structure and common terminology helped the debrief run more smoothly. The real benefit to the students though will be when they come to reflect afterwards (which I hope they will now be more likely to do).' Constructive criticism was united; tutors wanted more support, guidance and practice in how to use the model. Prompt questions were requested to help break the model down. Although at first glance basic, many people struggled to interpret and apply the 'So what?' part of the model, and I had struggled also when teaching to articulate examples.

Dialogue with clinic tutors also gave rise to the idea of using a simple reflective practice model to formalise assessment of competence within Training Clinic and provide guidelines to help identify whether an adequate level of reflection has been achieved post-consultation. One tutor commented that currently the assessment of reflective competence is often something left to the end of the session and then signed off, because defining it is abstract and difficult. See *Recommendations point 2*.

In anticipation of the next lecture weekend, I decided to employ Rolfe's framework; a natural support for Borton's cycle (Lucas, 2012, p164). Rolfe's expanded version and prompt questions help me to understand the part I had struggled to articulate. The cycle remains simple but its simplicity suited the time restrictions of the day. My diary records my preparations and concerns:

I have taken on feedback from students and tutors and employed Rolfe's model for more guidance. I have supplied the students with the questions, and I will talk it through with them. I have also given tutors more prescriptive instructions regarding how to run through the session. I have asked tutors to guide the students as far as possible.

However, obstacles are that our tutors are not trained in reflective supervision, and each tutor is supervising 2-3 different groups, meaning that the reflective element risks being at least partially done without the tutor present.

Afterwards I found time to talk to learners about how they have found using the models. They felt that both reflective models were still 'nebulous' and 'ethereal'. One student expressed how odd it felt to have such a tangible and intense experience to then review it using a nebulous set of questions. I confess to feeling mildly exasperated in the moment. However, the action I took away from this was the possibility of providing learners with an example of my own workings with the model. Seeing the model in action yielding results may encourage students to grasp this tool and tangibly use it. See *Longer-term changes to practice (planned actions) point 1*.

Longer-term changes to practice (planned actions)

1. As module leader I will ensure the continued application of reflective models and introduction of reflective peer supervision sessions from the start of the clinical practice modules if not before. A scaffolding approach will be adopted in the use of models with a view to helping students move from tool handling to the understanding of the principles. Established professional relationships will continue to be nurtured and sustained to help inform ongoing development. Support, training and guidance needs will be monitored, evaluated and improved going forward. Outputs will be reviewed and adjusted for to promote the desired outcome of better student engagement with reflective practice (see *Aims and Objectives*).
2. As teacher and reflective practitioner, I intend to apply reflective models to my own private reflection cycle in the manner outlined in *Findings* with a view to enhancing appreciation and familiarity with reflective models to benefit both my teaching and own practice.
3. Within the next few weeks I will be planning and co-delivering a reflective practice training webinar for qualified nutritional therapists hosted by our membership body the British Association for Nutrition and Lifestyle Medicine (BANT). This will expand the in-house resources available and will open the door for me to become recognised within the nutritional therapy community for a reflective practice

specialism. Looking forward I hope to be able to advocate for further professional development and have some influence over the importance placed on this.

4. Intervention and outcomes once evaluated across a longer term will be shared with fellow training providers (at Training Providers Forums). Sharing my results should help raise awareness of the importance of reflective practice teaching, and may help encourage similar changes, including staff development, amongst other training providers with a view to influencing the industry as a whole.

Recommendations

Due to the timeframe of the research project, the implementation of certain actions and recommendations sit outside of the scope of this summary. Recommendations are as follows:

1. I will recommend to the Dean, Head of Courses and academic team that clear mapping is initiated by the module leaders who cover reflective practice. This needs to be addressed so curriculum-wide layering up of the reflective practice skillset is coherent and effective. I envisage the output of this recommendation to be the formation of an academic team responsible for the mapping, planning and teaching of reflective practice across the curriculum, meaning a more unified approach and better peer support and pooling of expertise. This will also provide an academic forum for the dissemination of new ideas particularly the results of this research project. The anticipated outcome would be more effective teaching and facilitation of reflective practice across the curriculum.
2. Training clinic tutors are highly skilled and reflective practitioners, but not all are trained in reflective group supervision. I will recommend to the Dean and Head of Clinics that tutors and relevant module leaders receive supervision training before the start of the next academic year to enable staff to be able to employ reflective models to the consultation feedback session both in class room role play scenarios and Training Clinic. It is recommended that it become an integral part of the post-consultation session. Anticipated outputs would be greater integrating of reflective

practice application and training within the clinical setting with the aim to produce more reflective clinicians.

These recommendations will be discussed formally at the next academic team meeting as well as in discussions with the Head of Clinics. I anticipate that they will be well received having already elicited a positive response informally from those I have talked to, including the Dean.

Empirical evidence suggests that unreflecting clinical trainees often have greater support needs that affect not only academic staff and clinic tutors but also the student's own training. Lack of reflexivity may also impact their professional life further down the road where critical and reflective thinking is key in order to succeed as an autonomous therapist and independent life-long learner (Gouthro and Holloway, 2013). The long-term outcomes of this research project should provide a direct benefit to stakeholders (learners) in terms of improved teaching and facilitation leading to better autonomy in practice, ability to assimilate new knowledge and rise to new challenges in professional life. Changes brought about in the curriculum may in a small way begin to enhance professionalism amongst qualified nutritional therapists, as graduates who have received this enhanced training start to enter the industry. Within the college environment, academic staff stand to benefit from aforementioned changes and recommendations to enhance reflective practice engagement. Improvements in the calibre of parts of the curriculum as a result of the project will benefit the college at large, both in reputation and offering. Outcomes can also be shared more widely and can be used to encourage continuing professional development in reflective practice amongst practitioners.

Reflection

Over the course of my research, there were many surprises, most of which came from within me. The 'scandalous' truth about my relationship with models, and the depth of my emotional connection to reflective practice were surprises. As well as what was emerging from the research, the research process itself also prompted some unexpected realisations. As it came closer, the prospect of writing up my findings not only gave me unanticipated insight into the student experience as discussed under *Project Activity*, but it also exposed interesting dilemmas regarding my position as insider-researcher. I began to feel anxious, vulnerable and in fear of judgement regarding the 'exposure of the personal self which lay behind the public instrument' (Marshall and Mead, 2005, p237). These were new feelings, some of which were rooted in a professional awareness of my efforts to maintain and express 'critical humility': being committed and confident whilst simultaneously aware that my knowledge is partial, evolving and could easily be contested (Marshall and Mead, 2005, p. 250). Other feelings, however, sprang from less rational sources, such the vulnerability and anxiety that whispered in my ear saying that what I had discovered as a result of this research, it would generally be remarked upon that I should already know, and what I proposed to do as a result of the research should already have been done. These fears caused a dilemma in terms of how to present myself, how honest to be. As I wrote I was aware of a sense of 'confessing' and that I should guard myself professionally against appearing inadequate. I was experiencing an inner tussle between commitment to the aims of my project and commitment to my personal self-expression. I confided these worries to my critical friend, which was helpful, and she encouraged me to see that it was important to focus on the point of the project – which was to benefit me professionally and to benefit my organisation. As such, findings needed to bend to this aim and some personal journeying was omitted, to be benefitted from in private. The insider researcher will commonly meet issues of compromise, but this is not necessarily a bad thing, nor does it reduce the validity of the research.

The importance of avoiding degenerative inquiry was at times challenging, particularly when grappling with the feelings outlined above. Despite this, I did not allow self-criticism to be the guiding force in my self-analysis, I was inspired by appreciative inquiry to openly receive good feedback when given and note my strengths, what my best was, for that to be built on,

expanded and emphasised. Believing that reflective practice must always be problem-centred can be part of the problem. At one lecture weekend, when questioned, 85% students put up their hands to say that they believed reflective practice is just for problems. But reflective practice is, as Sally phrased it, 'making what's good even stronger'. I wanted to celebrate this in the data gathering and writing up of my project.

The irony of first-person inquiry is that it not actually first person. Although the journey was chiefly my own, and many of the changes are for me to action, my interactions with students and staff meant a blending of ideas, thought processes and opinions. I have the power to draw the final conclusions, but my conclusions represent multiple voices, multiple ways of knowing. Ramsey argues that all action is joint action and that this 'creates a tension in any first-person action research, for the rhetoric of writing about it will always create the impression of an individual agent' (Marshall and Mead, 2005). It is important to acknowledge therefore the collective nature of first-person inquiry as well as the individual journey, and I hope to have illustrated this through my writing up process. First person inquiry also brings many nuances: each observation, each conclusion, each abduction is set in the context of the individual and who that individual is; the life they have experienced, their griefs, their passions, their lost dreams and their victories. I understand that I bring not only my professional but my personal history to this piece of research and that it has intrinsically informed my ability to observe, and my findings and conclusions.

As I conclude, I consider my struggles with my own physical aging of late and how the mirror will only bear me bad tidings from now on, but I place my hope in the reflective practice mirrors that should present me with a different image, one that is increasingly gratifying upon scrutiny. After all, 'life is too short, and too dangerous, to waste a lot of time acting in uncritical ways' (Brookfield, 2012, p12).

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Appendix 1

Academic calendar – a proposed structure for reflective cycles.

Day	Date	Module	Details
Wednesday	14 th November 2018	Year Two: Clinical Practice One	Reflective practice / personal development portfolio webinar. Teaching and Q&A session.
Saturday	24 th November 2018	Year Three: Clinical Practice Two	Full day lecture by external lecturer on reflective practice and therapeutic skills, including small group supervision sessions. Scope for a high level of interaction with students – observation and one to one/small group conversations and engagement.
Sunday	25 th November 2018	Clinical Practice Two	Lecture day (not RP) – opportunity to continue engagement with students.
Sunday	3 rd December 2018	Year One: Principles of Nutrition	Year one lecture on reflective practice (an introduction). An opportunity to conduct observation and one to one/small group conversations and engagement (if needed).
Monday	10 th December 2018	Clinical Practice One	Personal Portfolio marking – giving written comments on student engagement
Monday	14 th January 2019	Clinical Practice Two	Case evaluation/reflective narrative marking – giving written feedback on student engagement
Sunday	24 th February 2019	Clinical Practice One	Reflective practice teaching (front led + exercises). First implementation of reflective model in small group setting to guide post-consultation discussion.

			The afternoon will be workshop based and will give me opportunity to engage with students on a one-to-one/small group basis.
Sunday	24th March 2019	Clinical Practice One	<p>Teaching and practising of role play consultations. Second implementation of reflective model to guide discussion post-role play.</p> <p>The afternoon will be workshop based and will give me opportunity to engage with students on a one-to-one/small group basis, participate in group reflection.</p>

Appendix 2

Participant information sheet

MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

PARTICIPANT SHEET (PIS)

Participant ID Code:.....

Understanding reflective practice: encouraging better student engagement.

You are being invited to take part in a research study. This information sheet helps you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study? In the health professions, reflective practice is seen as a necessity for practitioner competence and ongoing development, but there is currently very little research on reflective practice specific to nutritional therapy.

I am conducting a research project that will explore engagement with reflective practice amongst learners studying nutritional therapy. As lecturer and module leader at the Institute for Optimum Nutrition my aims are to gain a better understanding of how I currently teach and practise reflection. By enhancing my own understanding, I aim to promote better student engagement with reflective practice on the course.

The onus of the study is on my practice, not your performance. I will be reflecting on events such as my teaching sessions and pertinent conversations to aid my self-development.

Why have I been asked? Engagement and interaction with students who are currently taking a clinical practice module is helpful for me to draw on reflectively for the purposes of my investigation. Your consent means that I can write anonymously about any interactions we may have had.

Do I have to take part? It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you do decide to withdraw from the study then please inform the researcher within a month of your participation, and I will facilitate your withdrawal (remove all reference to you from their written accounts). Please note that once published it will not be possible to remove

reference to you. *Please note that all accounts are anonymised and/or fictionalised, and you will not be identifiable in any way.* Please note that your decision to withdraw will not affect your student status in any way.

What do I have to do? Outside of conversations that might happen in the capacity of module leader/student, I may ask for your opinion via email or phone on an account I have written about the experience we have shared. This is to ensure that you are happy with my interpretation, to open my account up for comment, and to ensure that you are satisfied with the anonymisation of the account. Anonymisation will be done by default unless you request for your name to be used. Your feedback on my account also feeds into my reflection.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? There are no known risks. You may be asked to comment on the account, which will require a small amount of your time outside lecture hours.

What are the possible benefits of taking part? I hope that participating in the study will help you to develop your own reflective practice and see it modelled by a module leader, with your contribution feeding into a collaborative cycle.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential? I have put a number of procedures in place to protect the confidentiality of participants. Any accounts in which you personally feature will be shared with you for your feedback and approval and anonymised from the first draft. Your name or other personal details will not be associated with your data, for example, the consent form that you sign will be kept separate from your data. All paper records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet, accessible only to me, and all electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer. All information you provide will be treated in accordance with GDPR.

What will happen to the results of the research study? The results of the research study will be used as part of postgraduate dissertation. The results may also be presented in meetings or in journal articles. However, at no point will your personal information or data be revealed.

Who has reviewed the study? The study has received full ethical clearance from the Middlesex University research ethics committee who reviewed the study.

Contact for further information. If you require further information, have any questions or would like to request that you are removed from any accounts in which you feature, please contact:

Researcher:

Emma Rees - ER391@live.mdx.ac.uk

Supervisor:

Prof **Brian** Sutton

Professor of Learning Performance

Faculty of Professional and Social Sciences

Middlesex University, London NW4 4BT

Email: b.x.sutton@mdx.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in this study. You should keep this participant information sheet as it contains your participant code, important information and my contact details.

Participant consent form



Version Number 1

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Name of Researcher:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet datedfor the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary, any reference to me will be anonymised and/or fictionalised, and that I am free to request removal from written accounts in which I feature without giving any reason.
3. I agree that this form that bears my name and signature may be seen by a designated auditor.
4. I agree that my non-identifiable research data may be stored in National Archives and be used anonymously by others for future research. I am assured that the confidentiality of my data will be upheld through the removal of any personal identifiers.
5. I agree to take part in the above study.

1
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_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

Appendix 4

Example of reflective journalling, including comments from external lecturer

mentioned how effective the Borton model could be: 'What? So what? Now what?' I am determined to re-apply myself to using models – to pick old ones up from where they were discarded because I told myself I was too advanced for them – and I will use them again, approaching them as an old friend this time rather than as a novice. I will set myself to use them in subsequent reflections – which ties into my conversation with my critical friend.

Steve talked about a journal being in a sense a listening ear or a second voice; 'internal supervision' – that in completing a journal you hear the echo of your voice back at you. It was interesting to observe that approximately one quarter of the students keep a diary of any kind (a show of hands). Hearing your voice as an echo gives a chance to apply greater objectivity to what you are saying. Reflecting with other people is as I understand, key, but when things are highly personal or too hard, perhaps the journal can act as a safe listening ear. Steve strongly advocates a physical written journal because engaging with the aesthetics of it enhances his reflective processes. He brought his diaries to show to the students, demonstrating modelling – and talking to students I observed that they responded positively to this, and for me it gave a useful example of modelling – another technique I've been tussling with. Personally, I am not sure what I feel about keeping physical journals and whether it would be helpful for me. I have had years of keeping a journal and writing by hand and sometimes it flows less well and feels more onerous than spilling my thoughts onto the screen. Typing is also speedier – although Steve talked about the value of an activity taking longer – we act too fast for our minds to process sometimes and life is speeding up causing great stress. I guess even in my reflections I mimic this emotional illness – typing is faster, more economic. But are economy and efficiency compatible with true reflection? Reflection is part of our health check, along with exercise, eating well.

Steve Davis
With this model, try applying (eg) TA theory (in the 'So What?' section), in the moment, while practicing (Teaching, NT, in conversation with friends / family). Ensure that you can apply the 'Now What?' in a positive way in the moment, or reflect later on what stopped you. Attempting SPEED reflection can bring reflective practice to life.

SD Steve Davis
If you haven't, explore the 'Inner Supervisor', as this is what develops form the regular use of reflection in action.

SD Steve Davis
Role-modelling reflective practice is essential. This is an experiential process; and this links possibly to your point about 'not bringing reflective practice models to life' for your students. Show it being done, get them doing it, draw out the actions they already have that are reflective, whatever these might be; sometimes you gotta dig quite a bit to find something good to use. This student group was relatively easy to work with in this regard.

SD Steve Davis
Slow reflection, being the flip side of the SPEED reflection I mention above, has a whole different sensorium about it. And what arises from it can be startlingly different.

I'd also say that Journal writing the exploratory parts should be done in an un rushed manner, so, hand

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